

89
THE DYING BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE AND JOY
IN CHRIST.

14
A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
WEIGH-HOUSE in LITTLE-EASTCHEAP,
LONDON, April 12, 1778,

ON OCCASION OF THE
Death of the Rev. SAMUEL WILTON, D. D.

Who departed this Life April 3,

In the 34th Year of his Age.

By SAMUEL PALMER, *Rev*

K. Minister
at the Weigh
House
To which is added,

An O R A T I O N

At his Interment in Bunhill-Fields, April 10,

B Y

SAMUEL MORTON SAVAGE, D.D.

Published at the Request of the CONGREGATION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY H. GOLDNEY,

For J. BUCKLAND, No. 57, PATER-NOSTER-ROW; and
S. GARDNER, No. 18, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

Price SIX-PENCE.

ch
ions

THE DYING BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE AND JOY
IN CHRIST.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
WEIGH-HOUSE, in LITTLE-EASTON-CHURCH,
London, April 12, 1778.

ON OCCASION OF THE
Death of the Rev. SAMUEL WILTON, D. D.
Who departed this Life April 3.
In the 74th Year of his Age.

By SAMUEL PALMER.



A N O R A T I O N

At his Interment in Bunhill-Fields, April 10,

BY
SAMUEL MORTON SAVAGE, D. D.

Printed at the Request of the Congregation.

L O N D O N :

Printed by W. G. GARRARD, at the
Beecham's, in Little-Easton-Street,
St. Dunstons, in the Parish of St. Dunstons.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

THIS house of God, which has often been to many of you an house of gladness, is now converted into an house of mourning. Nor are you of this congregation the only mourners in Zion on the present occasion. Many from other societies are come to mingle their tears with yours; and many more, not only in this great city, but in various distant parts of the kingdom, deeply lament the loss which you and they and the world have sustained.—My present appearance in this place, where I have often stood with pleasure, is attended with a degree of pain greater than I can express. My affection, however, for the deceased, who requested this service of me, and my respect for you and his other friends who concur in the request, forbid my declining it; and, painful as it is, I hope through the divine presence and blessing, it may prove a profitable one to us all.—The Providence which occasions this solemn meeting has a voice to all,

B

which

which speaks a more affecting language even than what your beloved pastor ever spoke. You may, indeed, consider him as this day preaching to you from his GRAVE. And now *being dead he speaks* with a more persuasive eloquence than he ever did while living. O may the Spirit of the living God give us all an hearing ear, an understanding and a feeling heart!—I can think of no passage so proper to be made the foundation of the present discourse, as that which was the last I heard the dear deceased pronounce, which was that

2 TIM. 1: 12.

For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

THE words of dying men are generally listened to with an eager attention, and are calculated to make deep and lasting impressions on those who hear: for death makes all men serious; and it may well be supposed that in the view of judgment and eternity, if ever, they will speak the language of their hearts.—The dying words of good men are peculiarly worthy of regard. We find therefore that those of David are distinguished, by the sacred historian, with this remark, *Now these be the last words of David.* In proportion to the esteem in which our friends were held, for wisdom and piety, it may be expected that the words they uttered with their dying breath will

will be regarded. I may hope therefore, that the passage now read will meet with the serious attention of this audience in general, as containing some of the last words which were ever uttered by my dear friend and brother, the beloved pastor of this church, in whose place I now stand. But they come recommended by a yet higher authority. They are the words of the chief of the apostles in the prospect of his own dissolution. Paul was now, for the second time, a prisoner of Jesus Christ at Rome, deserted by his friends and lying at the mercy of that bloody tyrant Nero, from whom he could expect nothing but a violent and cruel death. In these circumstances he writes this epistle to his beloved son Timothy, to prepare him for the like sufferings in the same glorious cause. With this view, among other things, he relates to him the state of his mind with respect to his own sufferings, and the divine supports which he experienced under them; in consequence of which he was enabled to view death and martyrdom with composure and triumph. *Be not thou therefore ashamed (says he v. 8.) of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the*

gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things. Nevertheless (says he) I am not ashamed. And then, in the words of the text, he tells him the ground of his courage and joy. For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

My present design is briefly to illustrate the sentiments which the words contain, and then to assist you in the application and improvement of them with respect to the present affecting occasion.—For the illustration of the words let us distinctly attend to the two following particulars.

I. That Faith in Christ which the apostle had exercised, and which he here reviews. And

II. The confidence which he expresses, in that review, with respect to the safety of his immortal interests.

I. Let us take notice of that FAITH in the Redeemer which the apostle had exercised, and which he here reviews: expressed by the terms believing in him—committing somewhat to his care—and this with a view to a future solemn period.

The name of Christ is not indeed directly mentioned; but none of you have so learned Christ as to be at a loss to know that he is the person intended, in whom sinners are invited to believe for salvation, and of whom it was prophecied, that

confidence and joy in Christ.

5

in his name should the Gentiles trust. The omission of his name here does indeed most emphatically point out the person intended; for *there is NO OTHER name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*—The apostle's regard to this Saviour is expressed,

I. By the general term BELIEVING. *I know whom I have believed.*

Faith in Christ is the grand requirement of the gospel covenant. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.* What that faith is, hath been matter of much debate among the professors of it. It is indeed strange that it should, considering the plain account the scripture gives of it. And if Christians (who are better agreed in their experience and practice, than they often are in their definitions of things) were but willing to understand one another, there would be little room for dispute about it. The first and leading idea of Faith in Christ, is doubtless that of *believing the testimony which God has given of his Son.* *These things* (says our Lord himself) *are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.* But then this Faith is to be understood as having respect to other doctrines essentially connected with, and comprehended in this; and as being so hearty and efficacious as to produce its genuine fruits. Otherwise the Faith of a
 I Christian

Christian differs nothing from that of a fallen angel; *for the devils believe and tremble*.—Faith in Christ has respect to the doctrines of divine revelation in general, but more especially “those which respect man as a sinner, and Christ as a Saviour.” Saving faith cordially embraces the Lord Jesus Christ in all his characters and offices, as they appear to be represented in the gospel; as a prophet to instruct, as an example to guide, as a prince to rule, as a priest to atone.—And this Faith may be justly described (as it commonly has been by our best divines) as an act of *trust* in him, or *reliance* upon him, as the Redeemer of fallen men. I the rather mention this here, as the original word * here rendered *I have believed*, also signifies (as it is in the margin) *I have trusted*. Accordingly we find, that in other passages, faith is represented under the idea of trust. See particularly those words of this same apostle, Eph. i. 12, 13. *That we should be to the praise of his glory who first TRUSTED in Christ, in whom we also TRUSTED.* “I have sometimes thought (says Dr. Watts †) that those words in the Greek which we render *faith* and *believing*, are continually used in the New Testament to signify saving faith; because they not only signify, in their natural sense, the believing of a *truth*, but the trusting in a *person*”—This faith or trust in Christ, of which the apostle speaks, may, in a few words, be thus described. It is giving him credit for the

* Πιστις.

† Evangel. Disc. vol. i. p. 7.

the truth of those high characters and offices which he professes to sustain, and exercising that dependance upon him which the truth of them demands. It is, in particular, such a firm persuasion of the truth of that grand report of the gospel, *that true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, as induces the guilty perishing creature to apply to him, and rely upon him, for salvation. It is to depend upon him, and on him alone, for justification from the guilt of sin, through his perfect righteousness and atoning blood, and deliverance from the power of it through his grace and spirit. *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* And the same faith looks for acceptance with God, with every other spiritual blessing on earth, and eternal life in heaven, through his mediation and intercession, and as the free gift of God in and through him. But the nature of this faith, as an act of trust, will more fully appear, from considering the other terms by which it is here expressed. We observe then,

2. The apostle speaks of having committed something to his care,

—*That which I have committed to him*; or, as it is literally read, *my deposit* *. As a believer in Christ he had deposited his most important interests in his hands. A treasure dearer to him than any thing he had in the world. He had indeed
nothing

* Τη παραθήκη μου.

nothing in the world that was worth committing to any one's care; for what he formerly possessed he lost for Christ, and he accounted that loss gain. Had the whole world been in his possession, he would have been but little solicitous about securing that, which he knew to be comparatively of no value. He had a treasure worth infinitely more than all the wealth of the universe. That was his soul: that rational immortal principle, for the loss of which, in the judgment of him who shed his blood to redeem it, the gain of the whole world would be an insufficient recompence.—I am well aware, that by this *deposit*, some * understand the Christian doctrine, or the interest of the church, which Christ had committed to the apostle, and which he, in the view of death, had given up to him from whom he received the trust, with the most pleasing satisfaction, that the great head of the church could and would take care of his own cause, when his feeble instruments were removed. This is doubtless a pleasing thought to dying ministers, which should be improved to comfort us under the loss of such as we think can ill be spared. But I apprehend this was not the apostle's idea here. It seems more natural, and better to suit the connection, to understand this deposit of the soul.—The soul, valuable as it is, may be lost. The apostle was sensible he had been in danger of losing his. He knew (as every awakened sinner does) that by sin he had forfeited

* Vid. BENSON, in loc.

forfeited it to the divine justice, and that in consequence of its guilt, its pollution, and its impotence, it was liable to perish for ever. He was sensible of the danger it was in from the snares of the world, the temptations of Satan, the various afflictions of life, and the influence of its own corrupt affections, *those lusts which war against the soul*. He was thoroughly convinced that he could not keep it himself, and that no creature in earth or heaven could engage for its safety and happiness. In this distressing situation, knowing that Jesus came *to seek and to save that which was lost*, he deposited it in his almighty hands, and committed its immortal interests to his care.—We are to observe farther,

3. He did this with a particular view to a future and solemn period—*against that day*.

He does not say *what* day he intended; nor was this necessary in order to be understood. What other day could he be supposed to have in view than the last and greatest? The day of the Lord. His second coming to judge the world. The form of expression denotes the distinguished importance of that day. The same form of speech occurs elsewhere; once in this chapter and again in the ivth. v. 8. where the day of retribution is most evidently intended. *The crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give unto me in that day*. That day in comparison with which all other days are of no account,

count, or rather that which gives to all others their importance.

“That day for which all other days are made.”

That, my brethren, is a tremendous day indeed! A day in which all that have sinned will need a Saviour: in which every one that has a soul will see (if not before) the necessity of having an Almighty friend to keep and save it. At that day, *the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, all that are in their graves shall come forth to judgement.* At that day Christ shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and have not obeyed the gospel. That vengeance none shall escape but they who are found in him, *having the righteousness which is of God by Faith.* * But all such shall find in him the friend and saviour they want, who will deliver them from the wrath to come, and be glorified in the complete salvation of his saints, even of all them that believe—in that day. † With a view to that immense felicity the apostle, by a confidential and obedient faith, had committed his soul into the hands of Jesus, earnestly presenting for himself the prayer, which in this chapter he offers for his friend Onesiphorus, *that he might find mercy of the Lord* IN THAT DAY.—And every believer in Christ will exercise the like regard towards him. This act of faith, however, is by no means peculiar

* Phil. iii. 9.

† 1 Thes. i. 10.

culiar to the last moments of life. Though then more especially the Christian will adopt *Stephen's* dying prayer, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*, this is a petition which he does in effect adopt when he commences a disciple of Jesus, and which he will frequently repeat, with renewed acts of dedication to him, and renewed expressions of confidence in him. Paul had long since thus committed his soul to Christ. In the course of his life he had often renewed this solemn act of faith, and now in the closing scene he enjoyed the comfort of it.—Let us now

II. Take notice of the pleasing confidence which he here expresses with regard to his safety and final happiness.

In his calm review of life, now it was drawing to a close, is there any thing that looks as if he repented of the most distinguishing actions of it? Does he discover any thing like remorse or shame or fear in the reflection of having served and trusted a crucified Saviour? Does he betray the smallest suspicion that he had confided for life and salvation in one who was either unfaithful to his trust or unable to execute it? No. So far from it that, in the view of death and the judgment day, he expresses the fullest satisfaction in what he had done, and an unshaken confidence that his everlasting interests were secure.

I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day.—Let us here

briefly consider—the matter of the apostle's confidence—the foundation of it—and the consolation which it afforded him.

1. The matter of the apostle's confidence.

It was that the redeemer was *able to keep* the sacred deposit. As to his grace and faithfulness to his people, whom he bought with his own blood, he could not entertain the shadow of a doubt, and he had an equal persuasion of his *power*. The apostle, though he had lost his earthly all for Christ, and was about to lose his life in his cause, was confident that he had a treasure of which no persecutor could rob him, and which death itself could not destroy—a treasure which, being lodged in the hands of Christ, was for ever safe. He was persuaded, that his great Lord and Saviour was able not only to preserve him by his mighty power, amidst all the arduous duties, the heavy afflictions, and the violent temptations of life, but also amidst all the horrors and the bitter agonies of death. He was also as fully persuaded, that when the immortal spirit, dislodged from the earthly tabernacle, should take its flight into unknown regions, that he, the prince of life, was able to keep in safety the precious charge, till *the day of redemption*, when, by his power, its kindred flesh should be raised from the dust of death; and, finally, that when that tremendous day arrives, he would shew himself able to keep it secure from danger and from fear, amidst all the horrors attending the

the last convulsions of nature, the wreck of worlds, the consternation, the destruction of myriads of ungodly men; and secure its felicity through the succeeding ages of eternity. In a word, the apostle was persuaded that he was able to fulfil his own gracious promises: *I give unto my sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. Of all that the father hath given me, I have lost nothing, but will raise it up at the last day.*—Thus much as to the matter of the apostle's confidence. Let us now

2. Consider the foundation of it. That was his *knowledge* of him whom he had made the object of his faith. *For I know whom I have believed.* Evangelical faith is not the act of an enthusiastic imagination, it is the effect of a solid rational conviction. Ignorance is neither the mother of devotion, nor the foundation of a Christian's faith. To believe in the Son of God is the most rational thing in the world, and that faith which is saving is founded in knowledge: particularly the knowledge of him who is the blessed object of it: the knowledge of—who and what he is; what he has revealed; what he has done; what he has suffered; what he is still doing; what he has promised to do. Such knowledge of Christ encourages confidence and joy in him, whereas ignorance would leave room for fear and distress. To illustrate this by a familiar example: had you in a time of danger (e. g. suppose in case of your habitation being in flames) happily

happily rescued the most valuable part of your property, and in your haste put it into the hands of a stranger; when you came to recollect what you had done, you would be alarmed for the consequence. But if you had committed it to the care of an intimate friend, you would rest satisfied, though you had not seen him afterwards, nor heard particularly how the valuable deposit was secured. "I know him, (would you say) and therefore I am persuaded, that in his hands it is safe." Such a friend, such a known and tried friend, is Jesus to all who truly believe in him; and, with far higher reason may they trust him with their eternal concerns, than they can trust their temporal ones with their dearest friends on earth. Earthly friends may prove unfaithful, and the nearest relatives unkind. Through inability, if not through infidelity, those in whom we place our firmest confidence may disappoint our hope. Unforeseen circumstances arising, may render them unable to fulfil their engagements. Some sudden calamity may deprive them of their own property, and of ours along with it. And, should neither of these happen, earthly friends may die, on whose lives the happiness of our own depended, and our hopes be buried in their tomb. But every Christian knows, as our apostle did, that he, in whom he has trusted for the salvation of his soul, is possessed of power, as well as faithfulness, equal to the confidence reposed in him; abundantly equal to every exigence, to every danger, and that this his heavenly friend lives for ever; so
that

that he may sing in triumph, with the sweet
psalmist of our Israel,

Firm as the earth thy gospel stands,

My Lord, my hope, my trust:

If I am found in Jesus' hands,

My soul can ne'er be lost.

But let us a little more particularly consider that knowledge of Christ which was the foundation of the apostle's confidence in him, as this will tend to the confirmation of our own.

He knew him to be the true Messiah.—Though he had not seen Christ in the flesh, he had the most incontestible and extraordinary evidence of his being the son of God and the Saviour of the world. His conversion to the faith of the gospel was affected by a complication of miracles. For so violent were his prejudices that no arguments, nor all the miracles which had been wrought, would convince him. In his way to Damascus, to persecute the disciples there, you know that Jesus whom he persecuted stopped him in his wild career, by a light from Heaven which struck him to the ground, and deprived him of his sight; that by an audible voice he reproved him for the madness of his zeal; and afterwards commissioned Ananias, in a vision, to go to him and by a miracle recover him from his blindness, and reveal the purposes of divine mercy to him as a chosen vessel.—Paul also knew Jesus to be

the Messiah from the miracles which he himself was enabled to perform in his name and by his power, ~~and~~ well as those wrought by his brethren. Not to insist on the many arguments which, upon a diligent enquiry, he drew from the Old Testament scriptures (particularly the prophecies) by which we are told he proved to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. The education which he had had in the school of *Gamaliel* gave him great advantage for such an enquiry, and served greatly to confirm him in the faith of the gospel. The apostle, moreover, knew the truth of it from extraordinary visions, and revelations made to him, when he was received up into the third heavens, and heard what it was not possible for a man to utter.—But besides this external and extraordinary evidence to the truth of the Saviour's character, the apostle had received additional knowledge of it from the internal evidence of his religion, and above all by the experience of its power upon his own soul. *He that believeth on the son of God hath the witness in himself.* This the apostle had in a very high degree. He had been *the chief of sinners*, but he had experienced that *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death.* He had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, a proud self-righteous boasting Pharisee; but he was become an holy, benevolent, and humble christian; and he well knew that he whose grace had produced the wonderful change,

and

and consequently that gospel in which that grace is displayed, must be true and divine.—Let it be added,

He knew much of the glory, the power, and the grace of Christ. From the writings of the ancient Prophets, from the histories composed by the Evangelists, from express revelations delivered to himself, he knew that he in whom he had believed was not only a true prophet, but a *divine Saviour*. In his several epistles he discovers the highest ideas of the dignity of his person, the glories of his character, the greatness of his wisdom, power, and love, and his persuasion that in him Deity was united with humanity to save the degenerate, helpless, and perishing creatures that trusted in him for salvation. Hear his own words in the few following passages among many. *He is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person. In him it hath pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily. Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*—We must once more observe,

He knew Christ as his own Redeemer. He was not only persuaded that he was able to save his people in general, but that his saving power and grace were engaged on his own behalf; and this was the principal foundation of his confidence and joy. The fruits of faith in his temper and

D

life

life had afforded him the solid and comfortable evidence that his was *the faith of God's elect*. And *the Spirit of God* (as he himself speaks) had witnessed with his spirit that he was a child of God, an heir of glory, a joint heir with Christ; in whom, after that he believed, he was sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.—This confidence in Christ's saving power was also confirmed by what he had experienced of it already. His knowledge of Christ was an experimental knowledge. He had felt the power of Christ operating upon his soul, not only in removing his obstinate prejudices, and effectually converting him to himself, but in strengthening him in his work and warfare. He had experienced the divine influence of the gospel and the Spirit of Christ, assisting and animating him in his arduous labours, supporting him under his heavy trials, succouring him under his severe temptations. In all these views he had found that gracious promise fulfilled, which in a peculiar exigence he had received from his sacred lips, *my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in thy weakness*. From hence he drew the certain inference with respect to his future security in the redeemer's hands, and his ability to keep him safe unto his heavenly kingdom.—It now only remains that we consider

3. The comfort and joy which this well grounded confidence in Christ occasioned. His
 faith,

faith, being founded in knowledge and experience, did not fail him in the time of his extremity, when every thing else failed. He had *peace and joy in believing*. The joy of faith appeared in the midst of outward distresses and the heaviest persecutions. *Sorrowful* (says he) *yet always rejoicing*. His faith caused him always to triumph in Christ, and defy his persecutors to do their worst. He was now (as we said) a prisoner of Jesus Christ, in close confinement, but his soul was free : free from guilt, and therefore free from fear and shame. Though he had the death of a martyr in immediate prospect, his heart was filled with courage and joy. By faith in his crucified and triumphant Saviour he had overcome death, as well as the world and sin, and rejoiced in the prospect of a glorious and happy immortality. *I am now ready* (says he, chap. iv. 6.) *to be offered up, as a sacrifice and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.*

I shall now endeavour to assist you in the application and improvement of what hath been advanced, with a particular view to the present affecting occasion.—It is natural to reflect

1. What cause have we to be thankful to God for Jesus Christ and his glorious gospel.

When we think of the value of these souls of ours, as rational and immortal; as allied to angels and formed after the image of their Maker; capable of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of him for ever; and at the same time reflect on the danger they are in of being for ever lost in consequence of the universal apostacy, O what praise appears to be due to the Father of mercies, who has sent his son to redeem and save them, who is in every view so worthy to be the object of the sinner's trust! With all the gratitude of which our souls are capable, let us say, in the words of this apostle, who well knew the worth of a Saviour, *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.*—And let us bless him likewise for that gospel in which this Saviour is revealed in all his glory and grace; and in which the most guilty, polluted, and miserable among us, are invited to come to him and make him the object of our trust. Bless God that this gospel has been put into your hands, and that the ministers of Jesus have been sent among you to preach it. I call upon you, my brethren of this congregation, in the midst of your present sorrow, to acknowledge the riches of the divine goodness to you, in having favoured you, for many years, with a constant succession of pastors, whose business and delight it has been to preach among you Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to encourage your faith and hope in him. While you mourn their loss let it comfort you to recollect that the gospel which they preached abideth; and that *Jesus Christ*, the great

author and the chief subject of it, *is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.*

2. Let us bless God for the many instances, in which the power and excellence of faith in this glorious redeemer have been manifested in the comfortable lives and joyful deaths of his people.

The experience of the great apostle, which we have now been considering, was very far from being peculiar to him as an apostle, or as a minister. There have been many glorious instances of the same triumphs of faith in the experience of ordinary ministers, and private Christians. Many such we have all heard of, and blessed be God, some we ourselves have known. We have seen the influence of a divine faith in not only animating believers to the most arduous services, but in supporting them under the heaviest trials: in raising them above the fear of death, and enabling them to rejoice and triumph in the hour of nature's dissolution, though suddenly called out of life in the morning of their days, and though they had every thing in the world that could invite their continuance in it.

Such an instance we have lately seen in the case of your worthy pastor, and my beloved friend, Dr. *Samuel Wilton*. He expressed that firm confidence of faith in the Redeemer on his dying bed, which was accompanied with *a joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Nor was this faith the effect of ignorance or presumption. It was
founded

founded on knowledge, and it was evidenced by the genuine fruits of holiness in his life. Though he was too well known to most of you to need a panegyric from me, were I better capable of it, (which, indeed, by an injunction under his own hand I am prevented from attempting*) it will be as pleasing to you, as it is to myself, briefly to represent the leading features of his character, and the general tenor of his life, which had so glorious an end; not so much with a view to his praise, as to the praise of that grace which was with him, by which he was ever ready to ac-

* In a paper found since his interment, (evidently written a considerable time before his last illness,) are contained the following directions respecting his funeral, which (excepting what the partiality of his friendship to me dictated) I transcribe at length, as they afford a pleasing proof of his humility, as well as his apprehension of an early death, and his lively hope with respect to futurity.---“ I would by no means wish to have a pompous and expensive funeral. All I desire is to be interred in a plain and decent manner, without any unnecessary parade; which appears to me no ways suitable to the humiliating view given us of human nature in death. I look for a triumph not to my interment but future resurrection. If I might be allowed to chuse who should address my family and flock upon occasion of my removal from them, I would request it of, &c, ————— I am sure he would not flatter by high-flown compliments to my memory, of which I am altogether undeserving. I would not have a word said beyond the strictest limits of truth and justice, and not even the little which they may warrant any farther than may be thought conducive to some good end.” It is hoped the following account will not be thought contrary to the *spirit* of this injunction. None who knew Dr. Wilton will dispute the justice of it, and its utility is sufficiently apparent in the views above expressed.

know-

knowledge he was what he was, and to engage others to a careful imitation, as well as to promote the comfort and resignation of those who are most sensibly affected with the present loss.

He was born in this city, of godly parents, whose early care it was (in concurrence with other pious friends) to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And they soon had the pleasure to see their endeavours crowned with success. He feared the Lord from his youth. He early received *the spirit of grace and supplication* in such a degree, that he was sometimes heard to pray with some of the family, when he was but a child, in such a manner as excited pleasing astonishment. The ministerial office was the object of his own early choice, and he applied himself, with uncommon diligence, to a course of study preparatory to it. He made great proficiency in grammar learning, in a little time, under the care of a learned clergyman of the established church, who always expressed great regard for the abilities and character of his pupil. He entered upon academical studies under the direction of the late eminent Dr. *David Jennings*, who dying before they were finished, he compleated them under the Doctor's successor, the present learned Dr. *Savage*; of whose church he also became a member. And he conducted himself, in every respect, suitable to his character, both as a member of a Christian church, and a candidate for the sacred ministry, so as to enjoy the respect and love of his fellow-pupils, and

and of all that knew him, as well as the distinguished regards of his pastor and tutor. "The nearer his engagement in the ministry was in prospect, (to use his own words at his ordination) the more his inclination to it increased. He entered upon it with painful diffidence, with deliberate reflection, with an humble, but cheerful reliance upon, and importunate supplications to, the Father of lights, for his presence, aid, and acceptance. The leading principle, by which he was animated to undertake and prosecute this office, was, that he might therein be instrumental of glorifying God, in the recovery and salvation of sinners, and of advancing the Redeemer's kingdom and church in the world. And he cared not what sacrifices he made of worldly profit and honour to attain this end, as those objects he never had in view." When he entered upon his public work, he gave general satisfaction to serious judicious hearers, who are fond of evangelical, practical, and experimental preaching, and soon received a very warm and unanimous invitation from a congregation at *Tooting* in *Surrey*, to succeed the Reverend and learned Dr. *Henry Miles*, F. R. S. Though his talents qualified him for a larger sphere, and he might have settled in the city, he prudently preferred this retired situation, that he might improve his ministerial furniture; and as the interest was greatly sunk, he wished to be, as he soon found that he was, instrumental in reviving it.—As soon as he undertook the care of a church, he applied himself

self in earnest to the duties of his office. Besides the ordinary services of the Lord's day, he statedly preached a lecture on the Wednesday evening. He also quickly undertook the useful, but too much neglected, work of catechising children, and was very diligent in visiting his flock; especially the poor, *the widows and the fatherless in their affliction*. Nor did he confine his labours to the people of his charge; he frequently engaged in occasional services in the neighbourhood; besides more stated ones, in concurrence with several of his brethren, on the Lord's day evening. And he did not labour in vain in the Lord. His ministry was visibly succeeded, in many instances, for promoting the great ends which he always had in view. He not only found the number of his stated hearers increase, but had the greater satisfaction of seeing many additions to his church, several of whom were effectually converted to God by his means. Having spent about ten years in this retirement, he was called into a more public sphere of action, to succeed the truly amiable and excellent Dr. *William Langford*, at the *Weigh-house*. It was not without much deliberation and prayer, that he determined upon this removal. No temporal advantage would have been a temptation to him; and in this case, it is well known, he had not the prospect of any. His desire was to follow the leadings of Providence, and he had great satisfaction afterwards in thinking that he did so. Though he was not attended by a great

crowd of admirers, the interest here, which had been sunk very low, began gradually to revive, and some valuable additions of young persons especially, were made to the church. May they prove steady and ornamental pillars to it! He had a growing interest in the esteem of his people, and I am persuaded many of you had abundant cause to esteem him, on account of the pleasure and benefit which you received from his public ministrations and private visits, in both which he manifested the most affectionate concern for your highest interests. His heart was much set upon doing good. I know that he had formed several schemes for usefulness, which, if his life had been prolonged, it might have been expected he would have executed with great advantage, for the good of this church, and the interest of the church at large. *He was indeed a burning and a shining light; and ye for a season (alas for how short a season!) rejoiced in his light* †. — He was eminently formed for usefulness, both by nature and by grace; and he conducted himself in all the duties of his office, and in his general deportment in life, as a minister of the gospel should. — With regard to natural endowments, he was remarkably distinguished by a retentive memory, a lively imagination, a solid judgement, and a ready utterance; so that though he always studied, he seldom wrote his discourses; which however, (when he retained the full possession of himself, often as said grains in straw, he had

† He had not been settled at the *Weigh-house* two years.

had the appearance of elaborate compositions. His acquired abilities were great. His learning was very considerable, though he made no parade of it; and his mind was richly stored with sentiments on all the several subjects of practical and experimental divinity. His acquaintance with controversial matters was not inferior; but he knew too well the great design of the christian ministry, and the worth of souls, to shew it in his public discourses; which were not adapted to amuse the fancy, much less irritate the passions, but to touch the conscience, to warm the affections, to improve and comfort the heart, to reform and regulate the life, to quicken and animate the soul. There was an uncommon favour, fervour, and affection in his preaching, by which it was well adapted to answer these ends. And the same characters may justly be applied to his prayers, to which we may add, uncommon fluency and variety. In short, he preached and prayed like one in earnest. In his great master's work, he discovered in both a mind deeply tinctured with the great things of religion, and fully bent upon answering the important ends of his office.

And his life well corresponded with his preaching. The several virtues of the christian character

From the specimen which the world has had of his works it is to be wished, that some of the few discourses he has left in writing might see the light; but with regret I acquaint the reader, that he expressly prohibited the publication of any of his manuscripts.

ter eminently shone in his habitual temper, and his conversation abounded in all the fruits of holiness and love. He was ever mindful to put in practice that charge given to Timothy, *Take heed to thyself*, and his tutor's admirable exhortations to him, founded upon it, on the day of his ordination; to which alone I need to refer a stranger who wished to know what Dr. Wilton was in respect to morality, religion, and prudence. Were I under no restraint, I should be tempted to enlarge here; as I easily could also on his social virtues, in the characters of a son, a husband, a father, a brother, a master, a neighbour, and a friend, in all which he eminently adorned his religious profession, and his public office. But I must add a few words on what appear to have been the leading features of his character, viz. his benevolence and his zeal. *His liberal soul de-vised liberal things.* The fortune, with which Providence had blessed him, he employed with greater pleasure in relieving the distresses of others, than in procuring the superfluities of life for himself, and he studied frugality for the sake of doing good. He was ready to every good work, and remarkably *given to hospitality*, as his friends and brethren in general, and many of his poor brethren, can witness. He possessed the social affections as strongly as most men. This led him to cultivate a very general acquaintance with ministers and others of different denominations and religious sentiments; and he discovered such an amiable sweetness and cheer-
fulness

fulness of temper, such a readiness to oblige all, so much candour towards their distinguishing opinions, and yet such an openness in declaring, and such a truly christian spirit in maintaining, his own, as greatly endeared him to all whose good opinion was worth securing, and as did honour to the Evangelical sentiments which he espoused. — And equal to his other excellencies was his zeal. He was *zealously affected in every good thing* which he undertook, and had spirit, equal to his ability, to defend himself or others wherever he thought the cause of truth or holiness, of justice or charity were concerned *. Nor did his zeal carry him beyond the bounds of moderation. If in any thing it *seemed* to do so, it was in the glorious cause of civil and religious liberty. But all who knew him will acquit him of an intemperate heat in defending either, and especially of any thing like malevolence towards the persons of any. He discovered a warm and laudable zeal for the support of the dissenting interest; which, as it was founded on knowledge, was regulated by charity; so that he maintained a friendly intercourse with several worthy members and ministers of the established church, and was ever ready to embrace those of them, who appeared conscientious, as brethren. In what he said and wrote upon the controversy between them and us, he was

* See two excellent publications of his, written on occasion of the applications of the Dissenters to Parliament, for relief in the affair of subscription; of the committee for which he had the honour of being chosen a member.

was actuated by a pure regard to truth, to the sacred rights to conscience, to the honour of the only head of the church, and the best interests of mankind. Though he thought nothing small in which the honour of Christ and the interest of religion are concerned; the grand objects of his zeal were, the great matters of faith and practice about which all good men are agreed. These he devoted his life to promote, nor did he think his life dear to him so that he might be instrumental to so glorious an end.—In a word, Dr. *Wilton* was as amiable and useful as most ministers of whom the dissenters can boast; as much beloved while living, and as much lamented when dead.

It might well be expected that a man who lived so holily and usefully, would die joyfully and triumphantly. It is my felicity to be able to assure you that he did so.—From the state of his constitution he apprehended, as his friends generally feared, that he was not long for this world; and he often expressed it with that composure which became one who had the lively hope of a better. As soon as he was seized with the disorder which in six days put a period to his life, he was persuaded that it would prove mortal. He therefore, with great calmness, set his house in order, by settling some temporal affairs; for his eternal ones had been settled long before. He was for several days a good deal delirious, but in the afternoon of the day in which he died he had a lucid

lucid interval, and gave delightful evidence to his mourning friends that he was ripe for glory. He said to an intimate acquaintance, who came from the city to visit him (after having spoken with great composure about some secular affairs) "You now see me in the near view of death, and I rejoice in the prospect. It has been my delight to preach the gospel of Christ and promote his glory. I am not afraid to die, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, &c." He then said, "You will go to prayer with me." Let us offer a few more petitions to God before we enter the world of praise, from which I am at no great distance. Soon after, some other friends coming into the room (for he had that day expressed his willingness to see all that would venture to see him) he put on a pleasing smile which gave him an appearance almost more than human. He addressed himself particularly to them, and broke out into a prayer, in which he affectionately remembered them all, and concluded with saying, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* One of them expressing some hope and desire that he might yet be recovered, he asked, in the language of reproof "Do you wish me to come back again into the wilderness? No, I do not wish to return one step. I am not afraid to die." He humbly lamented his imperfections, though he expressed his satisfaction in having laid himself out for promoting the honour of his great Lord; and said, "I have had my doubts, but my hope is well founded."

"I have

"I have had such manifestations of the love of God that I do not, I cannot doubt." He then expressed the most lively and delightful views and foretastes of the heavenly happiness, in such transporting language, as astonished the hearers, and as they are not able to repeat, so as to give any idea to others of the delightful scene; we must therefore leave it, and wait for Heaven to compleat the narrative.—Having expressed a desire to see his intimate friend and brother (who has now the affliction of addressing you) "once more" (as he expressed it) "before we meet in glory," I was immediately sent for, and readily went, though not till nature was almost exhausted. On my approaching his bed, and saying "This is the most painful meeting we have ever had," he very chearfully answered, "We shall soon meet again." When I congratulated him upon the strong consolation which he had enjoyed, he expressed the continuance of it, and then repeated the words on which I have been discoursing, *I know in whom I have believed, &c.* Hereupon his delirium returned, and the symptoms of his dissolution came speedily on. For a considerable time he struggled hard, apparently under great agony, attended at times with doleful groans; but even these were mingled with *Hallelujahs*, which he frequently repeated, till at length nature was entirely spent, his breath gradually failed, and just at the mid-night hour I saw him sweetly fall asleep in Jesus.

Let

Let this triumphant exit of our dear friend serve to comfort us under our heavy loss, and to reconcile us to that mysterious dispensation of Providence which has cut off so useful and desirable a life in its prime. And while, with humble faith and pious resignation, we wait for the light of eternity to explain the reasons of an event so mournful to his family, to the world, and to the church, let all who are acquainted with it lay it to heart, and join in praising the God of all grace for what his departed servant was, for what he did, and for what he enjoyed. I call upon you, the aged parents, the mourning widow, the fatherless children, the other relatives, the intimate friends of the deceased—his brethren in the ministry, his flock in particular, and his acquaintance in general; while you affectionately lament your own and each other's loss, I call upon you to bless God for this fresh and striking testimony to the truth, the power, and the excellence of the gospel,—I must add,

3. Let us all be desirous that we may die the same joyful triumphant death. Die we all of us must. How soon, God alone can tell. Surely there is not one among us, but, on hearing of the death-bed consolations of our friend, is constrained to adopt the wish of *Balaam*, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!* O happy they, of whom it is truly said, *They died in faith!* How glorious, how desirable is such a death! “Let who will please themselves with

"talking of a philosophical death, let me die
 "like a Christian. Let them trust to natural
 "reason and resolution, but O do thou give me
 "faith. Faith will prop my languishing head,
 "dispel the mists from my clouded eyes, quicken
 "my feeble pulse, and revive my sinking spirits.
 "The richest cordial in nature cannot compare
 "with it." *Grove.*

Then, when ye hear my heart-strings break,
 How soft my minutes roll!
 A mortal paleness on my cheek,
 And glory in my soul. *Watts.*

How poor, how insipid and comfortless, the
 flattering account, lately published*, of the phi-
 losophical death of a much admired sceptic, who
 left the world without so much as hinting at fu-
 turity, or mentioning the Being who gave him
 existence, in comparison with that of a Christian
 minister; now imperfectly related. Who that
 makes the smallest pretensions to the character
 of a reasonable creature, would not prefer the situ-
 ation of the latter, though his memory should
 soon be entirely forgotten, to that of the for-
 mer, with all the *literary fame*, which was confes-
 sedly the ultimate object of his ambition. I
 cannot suppose there is that person here, who,
 on the comparison, does not feel his heart
 adopting the wish, "Let me die in Faith."

Blessed

* See the Life of David Hume, Esq.

Blessed be God, such a wish needs not be a vain ineffectual one. It is a possible attainment. But remember, wishing alone will not do. Would you *die* in faith? It is necessary you should *live* in faith also. The apostle, whose words we have been considering, could say, *The life which I live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.* O begin to live that life now. Beg of God to give you *the like precious faith*, to regulate your lives, which will render your death safe and comfortable. Come now by faith, ye who have lived a life of sense and sin, come and give up your souls into the hands of Jesus, to be pardoned, sanctified, and saved. Ye men of the world, who have been hitherto most solicitous about your earthly treasures, who have lost, or are in danger of losing, your substance, through the failure of those whom you thought secure, and who are sometimes alarmed with an apprehension of the failure of public credit, and are anxious to know where you shall safely deposite your wealth; be engaged this day to bestow one thought about your Souls, and bethink yourselves what will become of them in that day, when your *flesh and heart shall fail*; that day, when creature-credit in general shall fail, and the world, and all that is in it, be burnt up. If you have not a saviour then, your all is lost for ever. He who alone can keep it, is Jesus. Commit it to him *now*, and he will. But see to it that you do this in the way which the gospel prescribes. See that

you commit the keeping of your souls to him, in well-doing †. It is an operative influential faith, which works by love, which purifies the heart, which governs the life, which alone will be found of any avail in that day: trust not therefore to any other now.

If those of you who, through grace, have believed, wish to experience the joy of faith, be concerned to know in whom you have believed. As ignorance is one common cause of infidelity, imperfection in knowledge is a common occasion of weakness in faith, and consequently of the Christian's want of comfort and joy. Endeavour then to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour. They that know his name will put their trust in him. And the greater their knowledge, the firmer their trust will be. Study the evidences of the gospel, and the great foundations of our faith in the author of it. Thus will your faith be the better secured against the attacks of infidelity in this unbelieving age, to which young persons are peculiarly exposed. And while you study the grounds of your faith, endeavour to improve in your knowledge of the glorious Object of it. The more you know of the glory and grace of Christ, as revealed in his gospel, the more reason will you find for your confidence in him, and the more will your peace and joy abound. — I will only add,

Be

† 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Be concerned to know him more as *your own* redeemer. For this purpose, often examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Be much in prayer for the Spirit of God to *witness with your spirit*, concerning the truth of your Christianity. Remember that, (as Mr. Charnock expresses it) "there must be something in your heart as a foundation for the Spirit's testimony." Cultivate therefore the graces of the Spirit, and be watchful and diligent in your general walk and conversation. Assurance is doubtless an attainable thing, but not in a course of indolence. Sin naturally brings doubts and darkness into the soul, and an holy God will withdraw his presence as a chastisement for it. An even and uniform course of communion with God, and obedience to his will, is the natural and divinely appointed means of enjoying solid and permanent comfort. Give all diligence therefore to make your calling and election sure. We often hear professors talk of their doubts and fears; and who can wonder that many of them should, considering how they live; how negligent in the great duties of godliness; how averse to retirement; how much conformed to the world; how contracted their hearts; and how little good they do. Not so lived our departed friend: it was in a long continued course of holy and humble walking with God*, that he attained the tran-

* As one striking proof of his piety, it deserves to be recorded, that he privately kept a yearly Fast, in commemoration

tranquillity and joy which he expressed. If then you would enjoy his consolations living and dying, suffer the word of exhortation, and *what you saw in him do*. I will close the whole with the address of the apostle to the Hebrews, (ch. vi. 11.) *We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end.*

ration of a signal deliverance which he received, when in imminent danger of his life, from his horse's plunging into a deep water, in his way to Tooting, when he first supplied that congregation. It also appears, that he observed the anniversary of his Ordination with extraordinary acts of devotion. And from the Journals which he has left in shorthand, it is evident, he had for several years kept an account of the manner in which every day was spent.

The End of the Sermon.

your calling and election sure. We often hear professors talk of their doubts and fears; and who can wonder that many of them should, considering how they live; how negligent in the great duties of religion they have been.

in P. 6. l. 10. for atone, read atone; ib. Note, for Evangel. Disc. read Sermon var. subj. P. 12, l. 24, delete that they do. Not to lived our departed friends: it was in a long continued course of holy and humane walking with God, that he sustained the

* As one striking proof of his piety, it deserves to be recorded, that he privately kept a yearly Fast, in commemoration

of my worthy Brother, who is to preach the

However, decorum, duty and affection will
 not suffer me totally to refrain from bearing my
 public testimony to his Worth and excellency.
 O R A T I O N
 Spoken at the GRAVE,
 in every Station, Religion and Character.

By SAMUEL MORTON SAVAGE.

IT is the removal of a good Man and an excellent Minister, cut off in the Prime of Life and in the midst of his Usefulness, that has brought us at present to these regions of Death, and might justify my giving copious vent to the language of friendship, affection and grief. But I shall check the Emotions I feel, as the extravagance of Funeral Panegyrics was one early cause of introducing much Superstition into the Christian Church. It is not the province of Ministers when they appear on these occasions, to strow incense on the ashes of the Dead, but to endeavour to improve such solemn events to the benefit of the Living. And were I to expatiate, as I could with Truth, on the uncommon Merit, and enter largely into the Character of our dear deceased Friend, I should anticipate, and invade the office of

of my worthy Brother, who is to preach the Funeral Sermon.

However, decorum, duty and affection will not suffer me totally to refrain from bearing my public Testimony to his Worth, and expressing my warm regard to his Memory. This is to do honour, not so much to the mortal man, as to Religion and Virtue, to the Grace of God, by which he was what he was, amiable and excellent, in every Station, Relation and Character.

To me, Dr. *Wilton* was peculiarly endeared; as the Son of a long-loved and honoured Friend, my Pupil in the Academy, and a Member of my Church; and in each of these characters gratifying my warmest wishes and satisfying my highest expectations.

The God of Nature had liberally endowed him with Capacities, and the God of Grace disposed him to apply with indefatigable diligence to their Improvement, that he might be amply furnished for the Service of God and immortal Souls, in the Gospel-Ministry, among the Protestant Dissenters, which was his own early and persevering choice, instead of any more lucrative Employment, to which his Friend's Circumstances would have given him easy access.

Never, I believe, did any Man enter on the Ministry with more sincere Principles of Piety, with a deeper Sense of Religion, and a livelier Zeal,

Zeal, though void of Enthusiasm, for the Glory of God and the Redeemer and the Salvation of precious Souls; never had any their Hearts more thoroughly in their Work. And God was pleased to give him general and great Acceptance in it, and to crown him with eminent Usefulness, during his short Course.

You, my Christian Friends, of his Church, can witness to the seriousness and fervour, with which he preached to you the doctrines of the glorious Gospel, and to the fidelity and diligence, with which he discharged the duties of his Pastoral Office, like another *Timothy*, naturally caring for your souls and prompt to serve all your real interests.

Indeed the Public at large were Witnesses to his readiness to do Good, to his Benevolence and Generosity; for it was a charitable Use he made of the Affluence with which a kind Providence truly blessed him, not giving him riches to his hurt, but to increase his Usefulness and Comfort, in making them instrumental to the Relief and Support of others.

In short, he had a judicious head, a feeling heart, and an open hand, accompanied with a cheerful, affable deportment, which made him generally esteemed by all who knew him, much beloved by his Relations and intimate Friends, and highly valued by the People to whom he ministered,

tered, who, having but lately begun to enjoy, might well have hoped long to rejoice in his Light.

But the great Governor of the World and supreme Lord of the Church determined otherwise, and by an Illness of a few days unexpectedly removed him in the midst of Life, from his affectionate People, his dear Friends and Family, and from the World, and his Place knows him no more; no more will his Presence gladden his family, no more will his Ministry edify and comfort his People, but they and we are left to mourn his Loss; a Loss indeed to us, though to him the highest Gain!

It should seem, that some of us more advanced might have been better spared; some of us could wish to have gone in his room, to have died as he died, in that pious, resigned, joyful frame, knowing in whom he had believed and with hopes full of immortality.—But it is the Province of God only wise to determine events; it is Our's to submit and not complain. It is our duty to resign up all our Comforts to God's disposal, and to acquiesce without murmuring when he pleases to remove them; not only because we have forfeited them all, but because he does every thing wisely and well, and has always his People's best Interests in view. And in removing good Men or faithful Ministers out of this World, He only translates them to a *Better*, not to a state of Insensibility

sensibility and Stupor, but to a state of rest and reward in the immediate Presence of Christ, such a state of Converse with him and Enjoyment of his Love, that, in comparison of it, the great Apostle *Paul* pronounces the most intimate Communion with the Lord here on Earth, but *Absence from him*; a state, that he declares *far better* than being continued here, though in a station of the greatest Usefulness and Importance.

May then the Family of our departed Friend,—his faithful tender and affectionate Consort, his aged disconsolate Parents, who are yet smarting with former recent wounds of this kind, and all his Relations,—may the respectable People whom he served in the Lord, humbly and devoutly acquiesce in the Will of God, however melancholy and trying it may be to them. And may they and we be all concerned to improve it and render it subservient to our most important Interests, those of our Souls and Eternity. From the death of our dear Friend, which we now lament, may we ourselves learn to die, like him, with safety and comfort.

Our great business in Life is to prepare for Death and Eternity. The Living know that they must die; this is *appointed* for all men. Scripture declares it, Experience verifies it; the frequent Funerals of our Friends and Acquaintance, which we are called to attend, are daily putting us in mind of it; and these numerous Graves of the Old and the Young with

which we are surrounded, have a Voice, that tells us we must all die, and that no condition, no state or age are secure from the arrows of death, which fly both at noon-day and at midnight, and sometimes kill suddenly and secretly, as well as certainly. Let us all remember, that as we stand around this Grave we stand upon the brink of another World, and may in a moment be plunged into it. And what will be the Consequence of that? How dreadful or how delightful! To think of dropping our Bodies into the gloomy Grave and leaving them there, a prey to corruption and worms; to have a perpetual stop put to all our activity and sensation, and to all our intercourse with this world; to leave all our dear Friends and Relatives, our Fortunes and Enjoyments behind us,—is a melancholy and mortifying consideration.

But this is nothing, to the consideration of what will become of our immortal Souls; whether they are likely to be happy or miserable to all Eternity. For after death comes the judgement; and as the former leaves us so will the latter find us, either dead in sin or alive to God.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to that which we have done, whether it be good or bad. There we must pass through an exact and impartial Scrutiny, and must abide the Sentence of the holy, righteous, all-wise and almighty

mighty Judge. And that Sentence will consign us, either to everlasting Shame and Punishment, or to eternal Glory and Happiness.

Of what moment then is it, to enquire which is likely to be our case, or how we shall escape the damnation of Hell and obtain the Glory and Blessedness of Heaven! This is a very necessary Enquiry for us to make: since the safety of our Souls is by no means to be taken for granted; they are in great danger of being lost for ever. For Death is not a debt of Nature, it is not a part of the original order of Creation: no, it is the effect of that order's being interrupted and violated. It was by Sin, that Death entered into the World, and it passes upon all men, because all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. Death passes upon all Men, as the penal Sentence of God's violated Law and a token of his displeasure against Sin: it proves us all to be in a degenerate, sinful state, guilty before God, liable to his sin-avenging wrath, to the second Death, to Hell and everlasting Destruction.

And there is no way for us to escape this dreadful condemnation, but by Repentance towards God and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; a thorough Repentance of all our Sins, productive of universal Reformation of heart and life, and a lively Faith, that receives Christ, as the Lord, our Righteousness and Strength, that by the tenor of the Gospel-Covenant gives us an interest in all

his

his saving Benefits, and that unites us to him and renders us like him in holiness and goodness, and so fits us for the enjoyment of that state of perfect holiness and happiness, in the Presence of the Blessed God and of the holy Angels, which he has procured for and promised all his People. We must be brought into a state of reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ in this World, or it will be wretched Presumption for us to think of being happy with him in another World. We must *live to the Lord*, if we would *die in the Lord*.

To attain this, is the *one thing needful* and absolutely necessary: this is the habitual, and only effectual Preparation for dying, like our dear departed Friend, with safety and comfort, with lively hopes of a blessed immortality. Faith and holiness make our title to and meetness for happiness, and growth in Grace is the only preparative and pledge of Glory.

Let us therefore be quickened by every instance of Mortality before us, to attend in earnest to the things that belong to the peace of our Souls; to renew our Application to our Blessed Saviour, to be careful in clearing up our evidences of an Interest in him, and to improve the little time which may be yet allotted us, in gathering in our hearts from their worldly attachments, in-uring ourselves more to divine meditation and
endea-

endeavouring to be more useful in the several stations which Providence assigns us.

And to this Preparation for Death and Heaven, the mournful Dispensation which has now brought us hither very loudly calls us.

It proclaims to us the *Uncertainty of Life*, and the folly of reckoning upon length of days for future Repentance and Reformation; since our late dear Friend was cut off in the flower of his days. It teaches us, that no Station of Importance, no Talents for Usefulness, give any Security for our Continuance here; since He was formed for eminent Usefulness, his Labours were highly valued in the Church, and his Life was of great importance to his Family, especially to his pious affectionate Partner, and his four young Children; yet he was speedily removed, all his services were suddenly broken off, and he is consigned to the silence and darkness of the Grave, where there is *no workmanship nor device*.

Let then the Voice of this Providence be duly and seriously attended to by us all. Let it awaken and quicken us to *work while it is day*, while it is *an accepted time and a day of Salvation: to give diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*; and to *finish the work* that God has given us to do, in our various Stations and Relations of Life.

And may You, the near Relatives of the Deceased, You, the dear People of his Charge, and
We,

We, his Brethren in the Ministry, who know how uprightly and unblameably, how holily and humbly, how amiably he behaved himself in the Family, the Church and the World, be stimulated by his Example to endeavour to imitate it; and be encouraged and animated by the comfortable End he made, by the lively hopes that cheered his dying hours, nor failed in his last moments, to walk closely with God in all his ways, to live in constant dependance upon him, trusting that *he will never leave nor forsake us*, that he will not cast us off when our strength fails us, but will be *the strength of our hearts and our portion for ever*.

Finally, therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye *steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know, that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

Let then the **VOICE** of the Lord be heard, and let us be awakened to his voice, while it is calling us to give him our hearts, our souls, our strength, and to make our **WILL** and **DEEDS** his; and to give him the work that he has given us to do, in our various Stations and Relations of Life.

And may You, the dear Relatives of the Deceased, You, the dear People of his Church, and